Postal Services In Villages of Rajasthan

†2329. DR. ABRAR AHMED: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether postal-services have been provided in all the villages of Rajasthan;

(b) if not, the villages of the State deprived of the postal services, district-wise;

(c) whether any time-frame has been fixed by Government to provide postal services in all the villages of the State; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SU. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR): (a) to (d) The postal facility of delivery and collection of mails and sale of postal stamps and stationery is available to all the villages in the country, including those in Rajasthan. However, the expansion of postal services by way of opening of new post offices and Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Kendras in the State is subject to the fulfillment of norms and availability of requisite resources.

Setting up of research institutions

2330. SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any plans to set up research institutions to further skills in free/open source software;

(b) Government funded institutions already utilising free/open source software in a significant manner, and

(c) whether the State Government would be, in any way, encouraged to go in for FS/OSS solutions specially while spreading Information Technology at the educational level?

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SU. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR): (a) to (c) Department of Information Technology is conceiving of "Linux India Initiative" which will be targeted to take a set of steps including furthering of skills in free software/open source software. Other steps that will be included as part of same would, *inter alia,* include setting up of resource centres.

Various Government funded institutions such as R&D labs, academia, Government Departments, as also those in industry, are already utilizing free software/open source software in a significant manner. Examples of Government funded institutions utilizing free software/open source software are BARC and NT, Mumbai.

The "Linux India Initiative" mentioned above would also include encouragement of FS/OSS solutions at the educational level. Already, lot of educational institutions, especially engineering institutions use FS/ open source software extensively. Linux India initiative is also intended to address this aspect.

Free/Open Source Software

2331. SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) what is Government's policy towards the use and deployment of free software/open source software in Government and Govemment-run-institutions;

(b) what consultations have been held by Government towards understanding the potential of free/open source software in making IT affordable to the citizens; and

(c) the outcome of the meeting held at New Delhi during the December, 2002 on this issue?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SU. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR): (a) No formal policy has been enunciated or declared by Government in respect of use and deployment of free software/ open source software in Government and Government run institutions.